

From: Patrice [mailto:fpclynes@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2011 9:21 PM
To: 'appropriationtestimo@cga.ct.gov'
Subject: testimony- HB-06380

March 2, 2011

Re: Testimony opposing cuts to D.C.F. Staff- HB-06380

To: Appropriations Committee,

My name is Frank Clynes and I have been employed by the State of Connecticut, Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Juvenile Services for 19+ years. I have served in several capacities and for the last 10 years I have been employed as a Juvenile Parole Officer. Prior to my current position as a Juvenile Parole Officer I worked for 9+ years at the now closed Long Lane School. I have worked with both male and female committed juvenile offenders who are considered the highest risk youth in the State of Connecticut. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current D.C.F. budget proposal that calls for the reduction of 22 Juvenile Parole Officers/Supervisors.

It is not in the best interest of the committed youth that are supervised by D.C.F. Juvenile Parole Services to lose the intensive supervision required to help prevent them from being funneled into the adult correctional system. With the anticipated reduction of 22 staff within D.C.F. Parole Services it is not a question of whether case loads will increase but rather by how much. The dramatic increase of caseloads for the remaining Juvenile Parole Officers will lead to no intensive supervision of the committed juvenile offenders. Without intensive supervision committed youth will be at a much higher risk to re-offend in the juvenile system or advance to the adult correctional system.

I've had the good fortune of almost 2 decades of employment with the State of Connecticut in the field of juvenile justice. I believe I have a good understanding of positive deterrents needed to keep our high risk offenders out of the adult correctional system. Without intensive supervision from a Juvenile Parole Officer as well as good community services/resources the chance of failure and the introduction into the adult correctional system is likely. Now is not the time for the State of Connecticut to blindly follow the proposal of the previous D.C.F. Administration. The new leadership in the Connecticut Legislature needs to stand up for our most at-risk youth and revisit the proposal to reduce the D.C.F. Parole Services Division by 22 staff. I believe that had the previous D.C.F. Commissioner taken the time to meet with the D.C.F. Parole Services Division her administration would not have submitted the proposal last year that now has found its way into Governor Malloy's proposed budget. Unfortunately, Ms.

Susan Hamilton during her entire tenure as D.C.F. Commissioner not once found the time to meet with 50+ staff from the D.C.F. Parole Services Division.

Since the Connecticut Legislature enacted the Raise the Age law in 2010, the number of committed youth has increased by 20% over the last 4 months. The second phase of Raise the Age is scheduled to go into effect in July, 2012. At that time 17 year-olds will be considered juveniles in the State of Connecticut. If one combines staff cuts in D.C.F. Parole Services along with the anticipated increase of committed juvenile offenders the end result would be limited parole supervision due to unworkable case loads. Limited parole supervision of committed juvenile offenders would equate to a higher rate of recidivism in the juvenile system as well as a higher percentage of involvement in the adult correctional system. D.C.F. Parole Services mandates would be impossible to achieve, face to face contacts would drop dramatically and referrals to community service providers most likely would be delayed due to time constraints placed upon the remaining Juvenile Parole Officers.

As a State of Connecticut Juvenile Parole Officer I actively supported the Raise the Age law. I am extremely concerned that if the current D.C.F. budget proposal to reduce Juvenile Parole Officers/Supervisor positions by 22 is followed through we could go backwards in the Connecticut Juvenile Justice System.

Committed juvenile offenders have benefited from Juvenile Parole Officer's lower caseloads. I personally have seen improved school attendance, higher compliance with community service providers and less issues within the home. Parents/legal guardians have repeatedly advised me that the high frequency of face to face contacts and intensive supervision of their son/daughter has greatly helped to keep them out of trouble. If the Appropriations Committee decides to follow the lead of the previous D.C.F. Administration and approve the cuts of 22 Juvenile Parole Officers/Supervisors I am convinced this will negate the initial positive results of Raise the Age.

Please also be aware that over the next 2 years the D.C.F. Parole Services Division will lose approximately 13 positions from anticipated retirements. Also, approximately 14 managers are currently employed in the D.C.F. Bureau of Juvenile Services. These managers have no direct care responsibilities of committed juvenile offenders, job functions are unknown and they have zero impact on the youth that Juvenile Parole Officers supervise.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony against the current D.C.F. budget proposal to cut 22 Juvenile Parole Officers/Supervisors. I strongly urge you to restore these positions to Governor Malloy's state budget.

Sincerely,

Frank Clynes